

Baker Elementary School  
Ward Avenue at Coleridge Avenue  
Llyswn Neighborhood  
Altoona  
Blair County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5908

HAES  
PA.  
7-ALTO.  
117-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127



HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BAKER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HABS  
PA.  
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117-

HABS No. PA-5908

Location: Ward Avenue at Coleridge Avenue

Date of Erection: 1906-07

Description: The original Baker School was a wood-frame, two-story building with a hipped roof, red-brick veneer, and a three-story bell tower with a pyramidal roof. Open arches on the top floor of the tower echo the arched main entry at its base. An early addition doubled the size of the school with a mirror-image west wing five bays wide and eight bays deep, with two large classrooms per floor. A 1959 steel-frame addition to the rear of the early building combined red brick with concrete in a typical late-modern institutional style: a flat roof and emphatically contrasting horizontal bands of windows and brick. The facilities added in 1989 are housed in a three-story, steel-frame building also finished in red brick, with contrasting bands of concrete intended to visually relate the addition to the earlier parts of the building.

History: Baker School was completed in 1907 on land donated by the Baker estate. A \$10,000 addition in 1915 increased its size from four classrooms to eight. In 1957 the Altoona School District commissioned the architectural firm Hunter, Campbell and Rea to design an eight-room addition to the rear of the original building. Six classrooms, an auditorium, and an office were completed in 1959 at a cost of \$385,000. For a year and a half during the construction, the fourth-grade class met in the Ward Avenue Presbyterian Church across the street from the school. A second addition, designed by Richard Karcher of the local firm Hayes, Large, Suckling, Fruth and Wedge, and constructed by Hench Brothers Inc., was completed in August 1989. The \$2.09 million project included a thorough renovation of the original Baker School, removal of asbestos floor tiles, provision for bus access to the Ward Avenue entrance, and demolition of a number of buildings between the school and Logan Boulevard to make way for an expanded parking lot and playground. Llysven residents lobbied the school board vigorously to ensure that the school would expand back toward Landis Avenue or over to Logan rather than encroach upon residential areas. The new addition included a kitchen and a large multi-purpose room that serves as auditorium, gymnasium and cafeteria, and the auditorium in the 1959 addition was converted into a library. The school can accommodate up to 400 students.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1930, 1932, 1951. Tax records. Altoona Mirror: November 28, 1958; December 23, 1958; May 6, 1959; May 13, 1959; June 13, 1959; May 21, 1987; June 16, 1987; February 17, 1988; May 11, 1988; June 6, 1988; October 7, 1988; January 30, 1989; August 5, 1989. Early photo in the collection of Anna Leopold, 101 Halleck Pl.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. An overview of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and an overview of Llysven (HABS No. PA-5787) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by Kathy Edwards in the summer of 1989 under the supervision of Alison K. Hoagland, HABS historian, and Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian. Edwards's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.